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LESSON LEARNED

Mass Evacuations: Determining the Impact of Tourist Populations on Evacuation and Shelter Planning

SUMMARY

Emergency managers should consider consulting with local tourist destination leaders to discuss the impact of tourist populations on evacuation plans and routes and to identify steps for making evacuation and sheltering decisions.

DESCRIPTION

On May 27, 2010, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management conducted a tabletop exercise (TTX) in Hampton, Virginia, that evaluated citizen evacuation and shelter-in-place and mass care capabilities. The scenario consisted of a Category 3 hurricane expected to make landfall in the Hampton Roads area, resulting in an estimated 10 inches of rainfall and a potential storm surge of 13 feet. Nearly 100 participants from federal, state, and local organizations participated in the TTX.

Hampton is one of seven cities that compose Hampton Roads, a metropolitan statistical area in southeastern Virginia. The area's hundreds of miles of beaches and numerous historical sites attract 1 million visitors per year.

During the TTX, participants discussed the impact of key tourist destinations on evacuation and sheltering decisions. The participants noted that there were no plans or guidelines to assist decision-makers with determining how the populations at key tourist destinations would impact local preparedness and evacuation plans.

The after-action report (AAR) recommended that emergency managers meet with local tourist destination leaders to discuss possible evacuation scenarios and to ensure that emergency evacuation and response plans align with the local jurisdiction's emergency operations plan. The AAR also suggested that emergency managers collect data on the potential impact of tourist populations on local shelters and evacuation routes.

Emergency managers should consider consulting with leaders of local tourist destinations to discuss the impact of tourist populations on evacuation plans and routes and to identify steps for making evacuation and sheltering decisions.

CITATION

Virginia Department of Emergency Management. *Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Region 5 Hampton Roads Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Tabletop Exercise After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)*. 27 May 2010.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=46558>

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